

PENNY ARCADIA

The Magical Museum of Amusement Machines

THE RITZ CINEMA, MARKET PLACE, POCKLINGTON.
(12 miles east of York)



**A CONCISE HISTORY
AND MUSEUM GUIDE
By JON GRESHAM**

THE COLLECTOR

Jon Gresham's interest in amusement machines was inherited from his mother and was encouraged by an amusement arcade at the caravan site on the Yorkshire coast where he spent all his holidays as a child.

Having earned his living as a fire-eater and magician on the music halls, in circuses and on fairs, he joined the family business of timber importers in Hull. He still maintained his show business links by presenting sideshows during the summer and learned that the amusement machines he had played on as a child were being thrown away or scrapped in favour of new equipment and in the spring of 1970 he was given an amusement machine by a showman friend.

He began travelling the country visiting arcades to enquire if they had any old machines in store and what started as an interest became a passion, not only to preserve the machines themselves but to chronicle their history.

For ten years most of his leisure time was devoted to following leads and scouring this country and abroad for machines which became progressively harder to find.

Having acquired the largest private collection in the country, he was anxious to display the pick of his collection to the public in order to share his pleasure in them and also make some room in his crowded house.

On 1st March 1981 he purchased the Ritz Cinema, Pocklington, only nine miles from his home, confined the cinema to the circle and opened Penny Arcadia in the former stalls on 17th July 1982.

It is his hope that everyone will enjoy their visit and that many will appreciate what a record of ingenuity, inventiveness, craftsmanship, popular art and taste these machines represent.



The Rt. Hon Lord Thorneycroft C.H. presents Patricia Gresham the Certificate of Merit Awarded to Penny Arcadia by the British Tourist Authority in their 'Come to Britain Competition', Duncan Bluck, Chairman of the B.T.A., is behind the certificate and Jon Gresham on the right.



Left to right: Punch Ball, Penny Shooter, The Racet, Everitt Strenght Tester, Singing Bird, Lisa, Graphophone, Wooden Mutoscope, 'Caille' Commercial, Mills Commercial.

THE COLLECTION

Three criteria have been used in selecting which machines should be displayed, it being impossible to show more than a tiny selection from the thousands produced over the years:

1. Machines that are historically important.
2. Machines that are particularly fine examples of ingenuity, craftsmanship or type.
3. Machines that were very popular which many visitors will remember.

We hope we have chosen an acceptable mixture of the very rare and the familiar but it is inevitable that we cannot include everyone's favourite.

NOTICE

Due to many factors machines may have to be removed from the exhibition and others may be added. This catalogue may mention machines not on view at certain times and fail to mention others that are.

GAMBLING MACHINES

The first gambling machines manufactured in quantity would seem to be the mechanical wheels of fortune produced primarily in the United States from the late 1880's. One of the largest and earliest manufacturers was Caille of Detroit, which in this country has led to any such machine being called a CAILLE (or CAILLIE) no matter who was the manufacturer.

On display is a 20th CENTURY, a rare model made from 1901 to 1904 and/or a BIG SIX first made in 1906, both made by the Mills Novelty Company of Chicago, while on the stage a counter-top 'CAILLIE' COMMERCIAL is demonstrated, thought to have been made in this country by a Mr Clements in either the late 1920's or early 1930's.

What is known as a fruit machine in Britain, and a slot or bell in America, was invented by Charles Fey of San Francisco in 1899. The fruit machine gradually became by far the most popular gambling machine.

The Mills F.O.K. FRONT VENDOR was made from 1923 to 1932 and delivered a tube of sweets each time it was played. The same firm's JACKPOT or POINSETTIA was made from 1928 to 1931 and was the second fruit machine to have a jackpot. O.D.Jennings, a former employee of the Mills company, made his JACKPOT or DUTCH BOY in 1929 (on the stage) and the LITTLE DUKE in 1932, this being unique in style and in its day the cheapest machine available and now very sought after.

The British did not manufacture fruit machines until the passing of the Betting and Gaming Act of 1960, their use being illegal prior to that. A gambling device similar to a fruit machine was the NEW TOTE reputedly adapted in Bristol by Brecknell, Munro and Rogers in 1936 from the ticket dispensing machines they supplied to London's Underground. The CLUB TOTALISATOR is a 1932 attempt to disguise an imported fruit machine mechanism as something legal. In 1944 Tom Boland of Leeds adapted old Mills mechanisms to a single reel and put them in new cabinets, such as the WHITE CITY.

The WAR EAGLE, introduced by Mills in 1931, pioneered the escalator and an entirely new styling to the cabinet, followed in 1932 by the GOLD AWARD, the most expensive machine in their range. Mills produced two novelty machines, the FUTURITY in 1936, which recorded the number of unsuccessful plays and refunded the money inserted if ten losses in a row were sustained, and the BONUS in 1937 which paid an additional award when the word BONUS was completed in the top window.



MILLS BIG SIX



MILLS POINSETTIA

GAMBLING MACHINES

The RELIANCE, sold by Bally in 1935, is an unusual machine in that instead of the usual reels, two pairs of dice were apparently shaken and the machine pays according to the combinations of numbers displayed.

The ROL-A-TOP produced by Watling in 1935 is considered to be the most elegant machine ever made while the half-size COLUMBIA, first produced by the Groetchen Tool Company in 1936, had a unique mechanism.

Three more novelties remain, all of Mills construction: the VEST POCKET, first produced in 1938, is the smallest operational fruit machine ever made but does not look like one - intentionally, the Q.T. mechanism concealed in a pintable and the HI-TOP machine surrounded by a recently carved figure of a one-armed western bandit.



BOLAND WHITE CITY



ONE-ARMED BANDIT



WATLING ROL-A-TOP

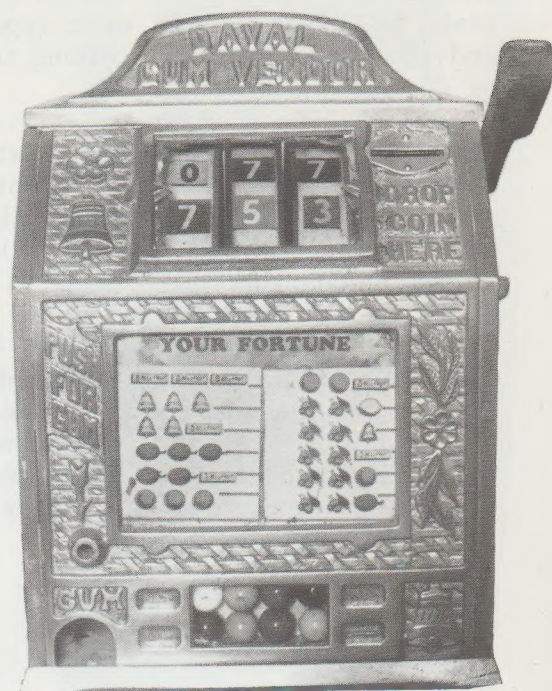
TRADE STIMULATORS

This is an American term, and a very appropriate one, for the range of small gambling machines that did not pay out cash. They were situated on counters and bar tops, usually near the till, to attract change and paid out either tokens, redeemable for goods, or nothing, the attendant paying out the award.

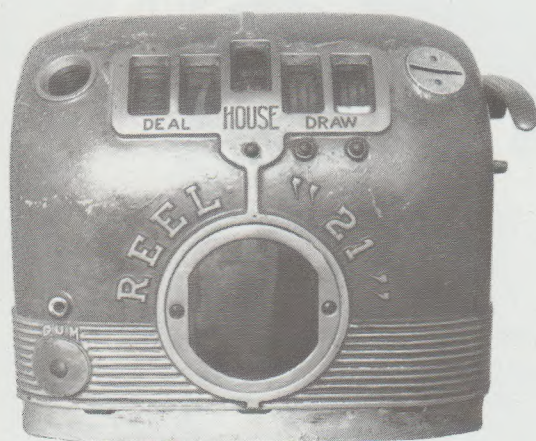
The MONACO DICE machine is German, appearing in one of their trade catalogues dated 1893. The most attractive 'LE TIGRE' was not made in France but by Caille of Detroit in 1908 and is their TIGER adapted for the French market.

Two of the most interesting machines are made by Mills, the card display machine on the stage named THE COMMERCIAL made from 1905 to 1914 and the wooden PERFECTION, a five reel gambling machine with card symbols made from 1901 to 1933.

Apart from Daval's MARVEL made from 1940 to 1952 all the other trade stimulators displayed originally dispensed a ballgum each time the machine was played, Daval's GUM VENDOR made from 1932 to 1936 and their 1936 to 1940 REEL 21, copied by Groetchen from 1936 to 1939 with their BLACKJACK and the same firm's SPARKS made from 1938 to 1941. The smallest trade stimulator ever made, in 1940 and 1941, was the Groetchen IMP.



DAVAL GUM VENDOR



DAVAL REEL '21'



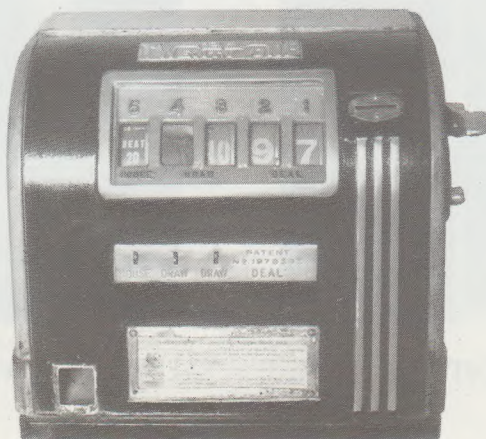
GROETCHEN IMP



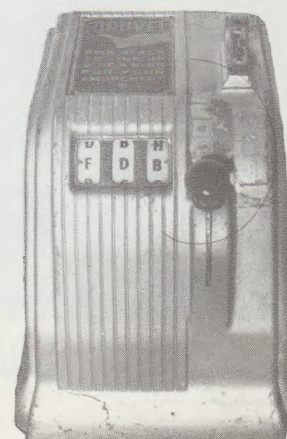
CAILLE 'LE TIGRE (TIGER)



GROETCHEN SPARKS



GROETCHEN '21'



MARVEL

MECHANICAL MUSIC

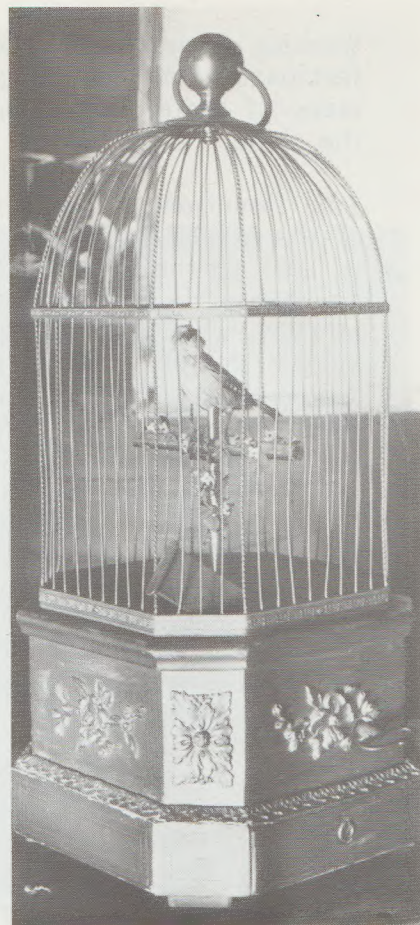
Prior to 1902 the most popular location for coin operated music, usually in the form of mechanical pianos or disc musical boxes, was in the bars of public houses where children were rewarded for good behaviour by being allowed to put a coin into the machine. An act of parliament in 1902 barred children from going into bars and the popularity of mechanical music in these locations waned.

The style 104 POLYPHON playing 19½" discs was the best known model, the one on display being manufactured in Leipzig on 10th February 1900 and was used in an amusement arcade.

Even earlier is the cylinder musical box movement in the base of the Dennison MUSICAL FAIRY working model assembled in 1882 or earlier. The SINGING BIRD is of unknown date and manufacture as several makers have produced a similar style for over a hundred years.

The phonograph is a COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE type BS, manufactured in New York in about 1901 and reminds us that the first commercially successful use of the phonograph, invented by Thomas Edison in 1877, was a coin-operated amusement device in 1889.

The TROUPADOUR jukebox on the stage was claimed by its 1926 maker, Bertie Mills of the Mills Novelty Company, to be the first electric reproducing jukebox and it is worth recording that in the nineteen thirties the American record industry was only able to survive the depression because of the demand for records for jukeboxes and the practice of recording 'pop' music to-day on 45 rpm discs, when all others are on 33 rpm, is because they suit jukeboxes.



SINGING BIRD



COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE

WORKING MODELS

Working models, known in America as automated pieces, are amongst the most fascinating and appealing of all amusement machines because so many are unique, many of their creators made them for exhibition by themselves and rarely made two the same.

John Dennison of Leeds is one of the most noted. On display is the mechanism and case of the MUSICAL FAIRY he exhibited in 1882, adapted by his daughters Alice and Evelyn in 1925 to the EGYPTIAN SEER. John Dennison had the concession for all the amusement machines at the Tower Blackpool from its opening in 1894 until his death in 1924, when his daughters took over until 1944. One of the conditions was that new models should be added each year and unable to devise enough John Dennison purchased automata (mechanical dolls) in Paris, put them into cases and adapted them to coin-operation. The FLOATING LADY is one such piece, the figures made by Decamps, purchased in 1907 and first displayed in the Tower in 1908. The CHINESE TORTURE was made by the two daughters in 1938.

The MAGICIAN is another example of an automata cased for coin-operation, the maker and adaptor are unknown but the figure is thought to be German and the case English.

Vincent Canova was a Birmingham manufacturer who was making models in the 1890's and died in 1930. His figures were made of wax and the AMERICAN EXECUTION is an example of his work.

Charles Ahrens also manufactured three subjects in some quantity, with several variations in style and size, the ENGLISH EXECUTION, OUR FIREFIGHTERS and THE BELFRY.

During the 1939 war when prizes for cranes were unobtainable, Fred Bolland toured the country buying them. He and his brother used the cases and motors for working models producing some 300 with distinctive style and excellent animation using cast aluminium figures including: THE BURGLAR, WITCHES CAVE, HAUNTED HOUSE, NIGHT WATCHMAN, EGYPTIAN TOMB and HAUNTED CHURCHYARD.



DENNISON CHINESE TORTURE



AHRENS AMERICAN EXECUTION

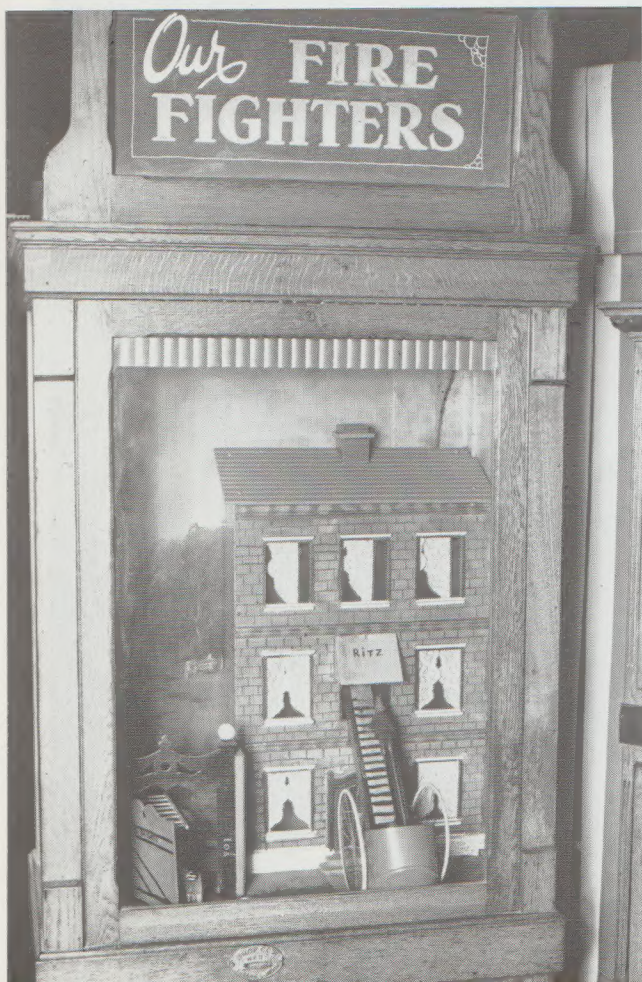
WORKING MODELS



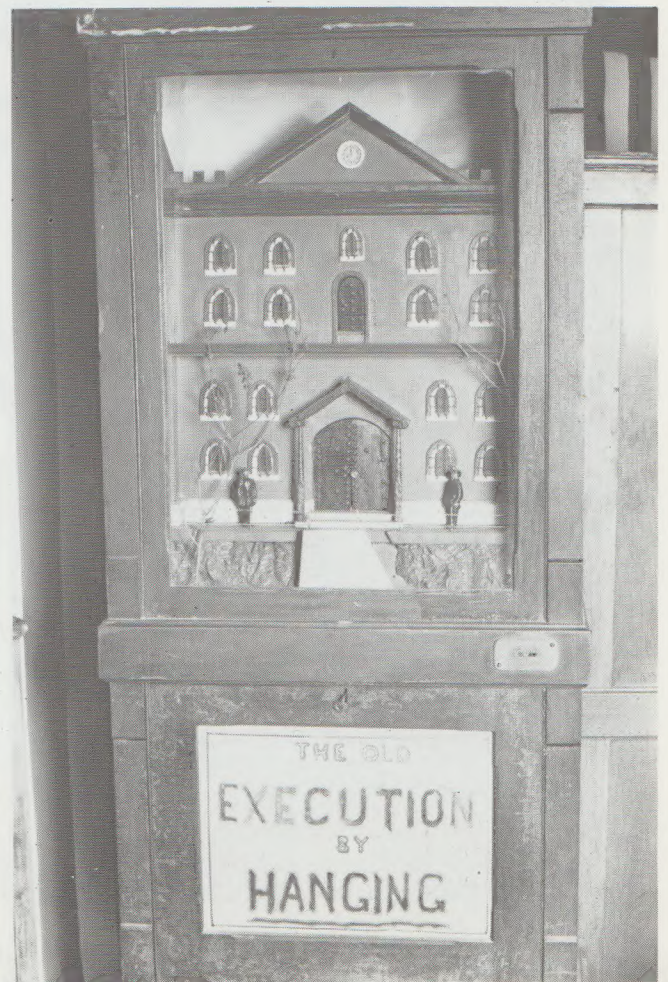
MAGICIAN



FLOATING LADY



OUR FIRE FIGHTERS



AHRENS ENGLISH EXECUTION

FORTUNE TELLERS

Fortune tellers were amongst the earliest amusement machines and have maintained their popularity until the present. The MUSICAL FAIRY in the Working Model section was a fortune teller.

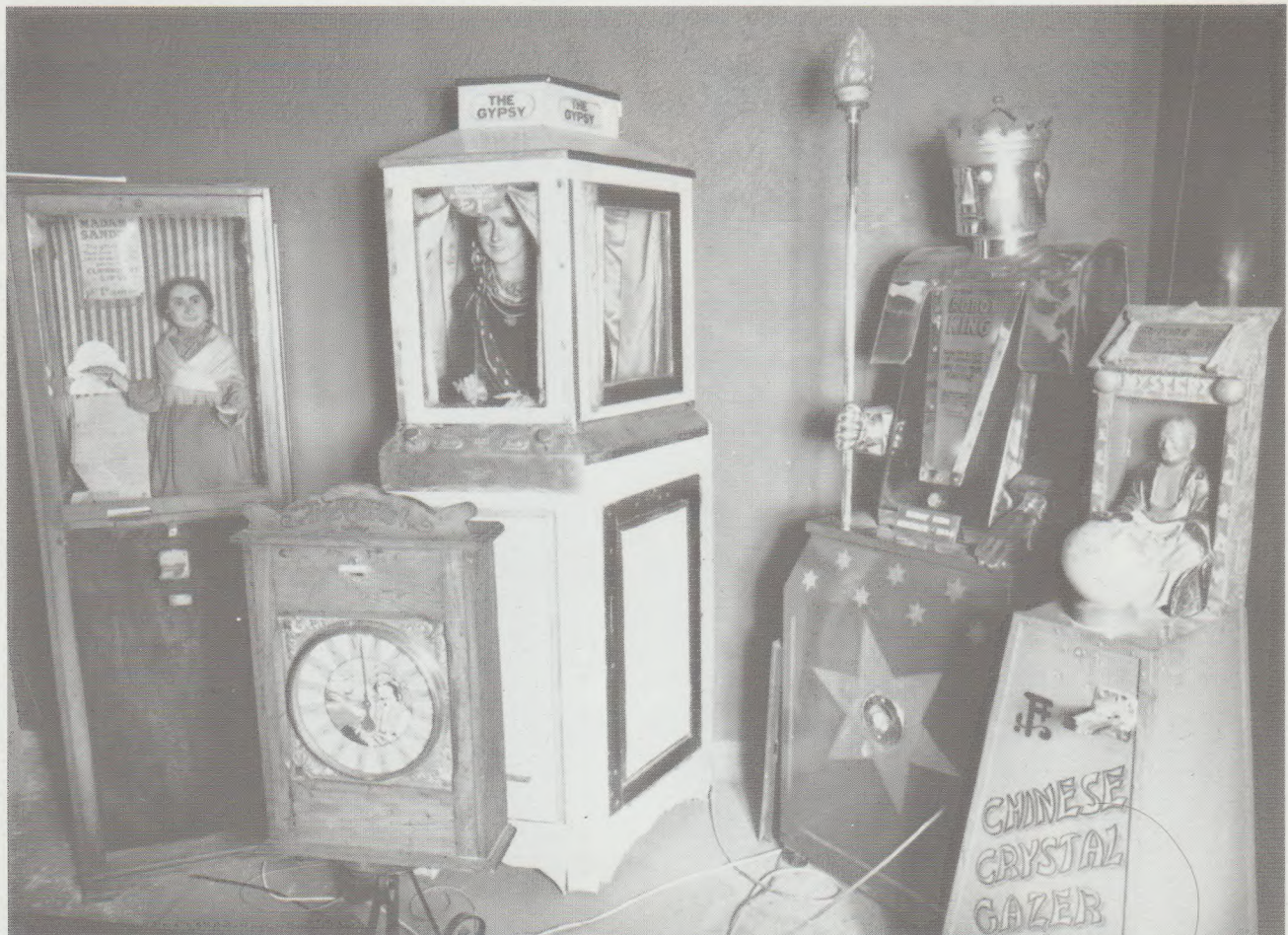
The most popular form of fortune was a printed card, often delivered by a Gipsy. Our GYPSY apparently writes the fortune and was made by the Adelphi Manufacturing Company in the early 1930's, but there are many similar machines. MADAM SANDRA is quite recent, the figure being made by Len Insull, a constructor of ventriloquist's dummies, and the machine assembled by S. Levine in about 1950. The HAND IMPRESSIONIST, or PALMISTRY, was made by several makers, including Ahrens, but ours is thought to have been made by Arnold of Southend-on-Sea before the 1914-1918 war.

Also built in Southend-on-Sea, but in 1936, was the ROBOT KING constructed by J.G. Brenner, which actually prints the fortune within the machine.

The CHINESE CRYSTAL, although British, has defied identification and reveals the fortune when one peers into the crystal.

UNCLE SAM is a copy, made in 1978. Originally manufactured as a grip-test by Caille in 1908 originals reached such high prices that they were copied, but as fortune tellers.

Three Fortune Tellers usually included in this section are really wall machines and are listed under that heading.



Left to right: MADAM SANDRA, THE GYPSY, THE GYPSY, BRENNER ROBOT KING, CHINESE CRYSTAL GAZER

FORTUNE TELLERS



MADAM SANDRA



THE GYPSY



BRENNER ROBOT KING



UNCLE SAM

VIEWERS

Viewers are of two basic types, those that show single views (usually stereoscopic) and those that give the illusion of movement.

The correct name for one in which the pictures seem to move, popularly called 'What the Butler Saw' machines, is MUTOSCOPE. The device, a revolving reel of photographs, was invented by Herman Casler in November 1894.

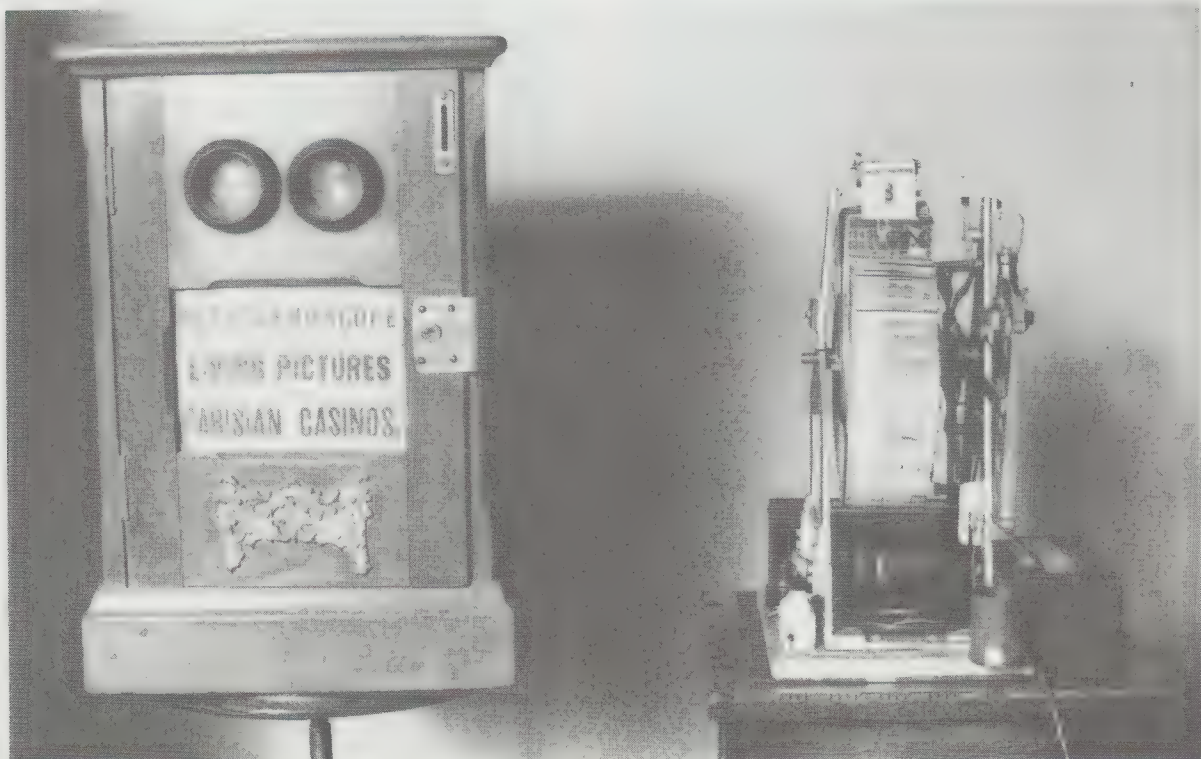
William Kennedy Laurie Dickson was employed by Thomas Edison and was the actual inventor of a camera using 35mm celluloid film and the Kinetoscope, a coin-operated peep show exhibiting a 50 foot continuous loop of this film, perfected in 1893. In 1895 he left Edison and joined Casler building the Biograph camera, avoiding the Edison patents, to produce pictures for the Mutoscope and later for projection.

Mutoscopes were built under licence in many countries and we have French, British and American models on display made of wood, sheet metal and cast iron. We also have one without an external handle, built in 1929 by the Coin Operating Company of Birmingham, in which the reel was revolved by an internal motor, which is believed to have infringed the Mutoscope patents and had a very short production run.

Viewers that showed a series of static pictures, usually 'art studies', grew from Victorian stereoscopic viewers and were made by every major manufacturer of amusement machines. The earliest on display is W.Haydon & Co's AUTOCOSMOSCOPE of 1902, but others by Thompson of Birmingham and Fred Bolland (on the stage) are also on view. The most unusual is the Rosenfeld ILLUSTRATED SONG MACHINE, made in New York in 1906, which originally included a phonograph which played a song, listened to through tubes, as one saw pictures illustrating the song.



BOLLAND AUTO STEREOSCOPIC



HAYDON AUTOCOSMOSCOPE AND MECHANISM OF MOTORISED MUTOSCOPE.

VIEWERS



GROUP OF MUTOSCOPES

COMPETITIVE GAMES



Left to right: MATTHEWSON FOOTBALL, FULL TEAM FOOTBALL, HEADBALL, WORLD SERIES, MARATHON CYCLIST.

Two person competitive games are those where two people each put a coin into a machine and have some sort of contest, usually with a sporting theme, the machine returning one coin at the end of the game to be claimed by the winner. These machines were particularly popular before the pinball or pintable.

However, on some machines the player competed with the machine to win a prize and on others players would compete with one another to see who could achieve the highest score so that many types of machines, like CRANES, STRENGTH TESTERS, SHOCKING MACHINES, SHOOTERS and PINTABLES can be classed as competitive games.

The first FOOTBALL game was patented by E.G. Matthewson in 1896 with two players in a cast iron case. He is also credited with manufacturing the PENNY SHOOTER (patented 1890) and HORSE RACER on the stage, two very fine machines. He also made the two-player ARTILLERY DUEL, patented in 1912. Eighteen of these cast iron shooters in three styles were bought and overhauled by F. Bolland after the last war, which is why his name is on the instruction plate.

The first FULL TEAM FOOTBALL was made by George and Harry Barr for the British American Novelty Company and patented in 1921, it was not until 1927 that Charles Ahrens made his. Other two-person competitive games made by Ahrens include the MARATHON CYCLIST, BUBBLES and FIREMAN RACER (on the stage). Avigdor Finkelstein is credited with the invention of the HEADBALL in 1927, made by the London Automatic Machine Co. Ltd.

The Pintable that started the pinball craze was BAFFLEBALL, made by David Gottlieb in 1930. This was not the first, although it is sometimes claimed to be, on exhibition is a Handan-Ni 7 ARCHES, made in 1920.

COMPETITIVE GAMES

The Mills PAY TABLE pintable made in 1934 is really a disguised gambling machine.

The pioneer of amusement machines, an engineer and dynamic businessman, now almost forgotten was Percival Edward Everitt who was granted a patent for the STRENGTH TESTER on the stage in 1886. Strength testers were very popular machines in the early days, the MILLS PERFECT MUSCLE DEVELOPER, first produced in 1904 though made for many years and known in the trade as the OWL LIFTER. PUNCH BALLS were made by many makers, also from 1904, to almost identical designs. The one on the stage was made by Ahrens.

The ELECTRIC SAILOR shocking machine is believed to have been made in Germany in the 1900's.

Shooters include the ELECTRIC PISTOL made and patented in 1902 and the popular PUSSY SHOOTER, patented by Victor Haydon in January 1930 for the British American Novelty Company.

Cranes include an early American DIGGER, where they were invented in 1924, an ELECTRIC TRAVELLING CRANE assembled in London from parts supplied by the American Mutoscope Company and the FRENCH CRANE made in 1935 by Sopransi et Bonzini.

Another prize giving machine is Ahrens' SKILL MERCHANDISER, a machine copied from the merchandiser patented by Walton of Blackpool and the subject of a law suit, but Ahrens' BOMBING PRACTICE is believed to be an original concept, although the only prize for success is the return of the coin.



OWL LIFTER



ROCK-OLA WORLD SERIES BASEBALL GAME

WALL MACHINES

Wall machines, so called because they were attached to the walls of arcades and cafes, are the most prolific of all amusement machines yet they are a purely European device. Similar games in America are put into small cases for play on top of counters as seen with Pace's 1932 BOOP-A-DOOP and SPIRAL GOLF.

Wall machines are cheap and easy to make, so were made by hundreds of makers. Not only were a bewildering variety originated, but successful and popular ones were extensively copied and old ones altered and modernised.

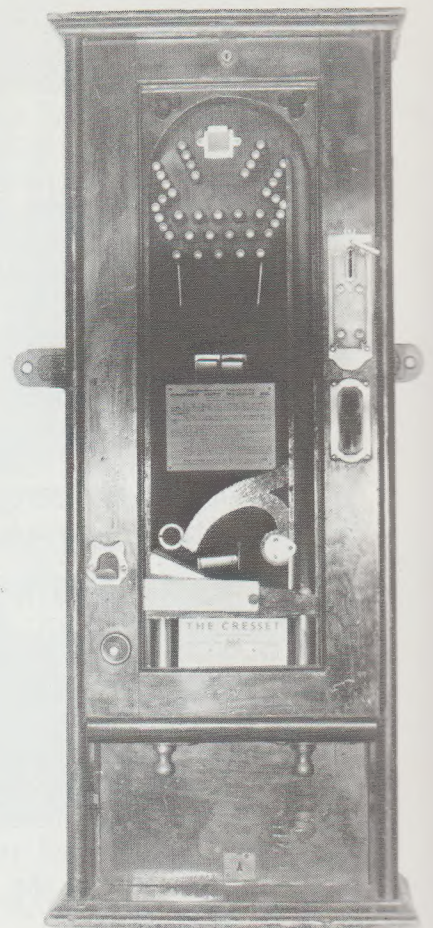
Two examples of hybrid machines are on view, the CLOWN 'made by Clem's Automatics of Redcar' was not. The machine was made by Jentzsch and Meerz of Leipzig, Saxony, Germany (the source of top-quality wall machines) and purchased second-hand by Mr. Clements who reconditioned hundreds of machines during the 1939 war when raw materials for new machines were unobtainable. Cigarettes were then in short supply making them desirable prizes so he added the cigarette pay-out. The OVER THE TOP was patented in 1894 by Smith, Haydon and Urry but put into a more modern cabinet and again given a cigarette pay-out by A.Powell of South Shields.

In their simplest form the coin inserted became the projectile, as in the LIFELINE, made in the twenties by Fred Bolland, the PATENT TIVOLI, which is known to have been bought second-hand in 1903 by the Littleton Arms in Great Heywood, Staffordshire, while the TWENTIETH CENTURY TIVOLI JACKPOT was a very popular type of machine made in many styles, many sizes, many countries under many names by many makers. The OVER THE TOP, already mentioned, is in this class as is the POOL TOTE, made by the Quested Automatic Company of Birmingham in 1928.

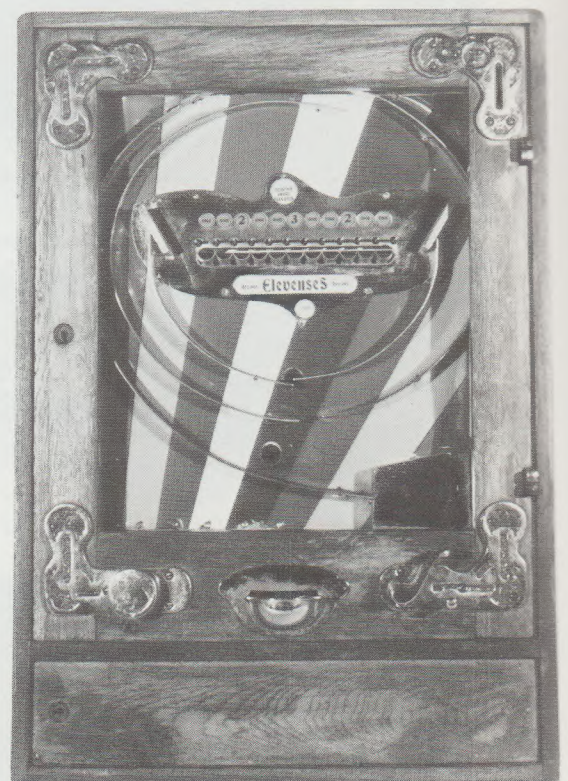
More often balls are propelled, in PING PONG, dating from the first decade of this century, into one of only two cups while at the other extreme the 24 CUP had -24- and was made by several makers. The LITTLE MICKIE was made in the 1930's by Charles Featherstone's British Manufacturing Company, a leading manufacturer of wall machines.

There are some who call all wall machines Allwins, which is quite incorrect. The ALLWIN is a specific machine in which a ball is hopefully caught in one of a straight line of cups. This concept was originated by Jentzsch and Meerz of Leipzig, Saxony, Germany but was extensively copied. The ALLWIN DE LUXE is a copy made by Frank Harwood of Birmingham, as is the ELEVENSIES, first made by BRYAN of Kegworth in 1955 which has several improved mechanical features and was the first machine given to the owner of this collection.

Machines in which the ball was caught in a moving cup controlled by the player were popular, having been judged in court as games of skill rather than games of chance. The CLOWN, previously mentioned, was the best known, the CONQUEROR'S FLAGS,



CRESSET PICKWICK



BRYAN'S ELEVENSIES

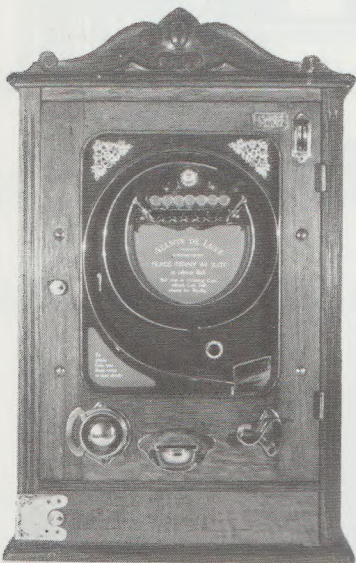
WALL MACHINES



BRITISH BEAUTIES BUREAU

made in 1917 by Thompson of Birmingham, possibly the one with the shortest life, due to its Great War topicality, contrasting with the Cresset PICKWICK, in its distinctive tall case, a style and shape very common at the turn of the century, a legendary machine amongst old-timers.

Three wall machines are included in the Fortune Telling section, THE GIPSY, whose spinning pointer stops at a prediction could have been made by any of several makers, though the coloured illustration was printed by Petty Bros. of Leeds for Fred Bolland, the BRITISH BEAUTIES BUREAU, made by at least three makers, although the one on display is believed to have been made in 1908 by Haydon and Urry and I WONDER, another drawer dispensing machine made by Fred Bolland. The satyr's head drawers are identical on these two machines.



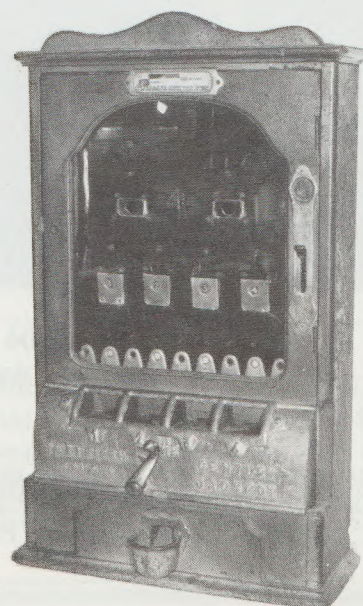
HARWOOD ALLWIN DELUXE



THE GIPSY FORTUNE TELLER



BOLLAND LIFELINE



TWENTIETH CENTURY TIVOLI JACKPOT



**THE MODEL 104 POLYPHON READY TO PLAY THE DISC
'BILL BAILEY WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME'.**

Anyone interested in mechanical music should join the Musical Box Society of Great Britain. Full details and application forms are obtainable from Reg Waylett, Membership Secretary, M.B.S.G.B., 40 Station Approach, Hayes, Bromley, Kent. BR2 7EF.

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